



Streamflow Regulations

JAN 27 2010

Paul E. Stacey
Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse
Planning & Standards Division
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106-5127

Jan.21, 2010

Dear Mr. Stacey,

I have lived in Meriden all my life (56 yrs.) and have been active as a conservationist having served on the Meriden Conservation Commission not only as a member but as chairman for several years. I am now an active member of the Meriden Land Trust and the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. For a large part of my life I have been a witness to the ecological improvement of the Quinnipiac River. This transformation would not have occurred if not for the tireless efforts put forth by dedicated volunteers from the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association (QRWA), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and several other concerned conservation and civic organizations.

Not too long ago, the Quinnipiac River (Q-River) used to be a flowing cesspool of chemicals, effluent and waste products. It was also a linear dump of sorts for all types of trash. Through the efforts of the above-mentioned organizations, cleaning up the river has taken many years to accomplish. In part, success was due to the restriction and regulation of such discharges. It has taken just as many years to clean up the physical atrocities dumped into the river. As a result, what was once a "dead" waterway is currently "alive" with wildlife. Anadromous fish such as shad, herring and striped bass make their way up the river to spawn in the spring (only to be stopped at the dam in Wallingford). Many water birds have returned, with the most significant being the bald eagle.

Besides the wildlife benefit, the Q-River has also been heavily invested in with the building of a new dam and fish ladder at Hanover Pond in Meriden. There are also future plans for a fish ladder to be built on the only obstructive dam left on the Quinnipiac in the Town of Wallingford. Recently, Wallingford and Meriden have completed two (2) linear recreational trails through a combination of federal and municipal funding. These trails follow and complement the Q-River. There are future plans to create a regional trail system by connecting these trails. Plans are currently in place to extend the Meriden trail by following a tributary of the Quinnipiac River, Sodom Brook. Furthermore, the Q-River is heavily stocked with trout by both the DEP and QRWA. These investments were not made because people didn't care, or because some said there was no hope !

That being said, the newly proposed streamflow regulations appear to be a conscientious and beneficial plan for most of Connecticut's rivers with the exception of the class 4 designation. As written, the lack of parameters set for this designation would do little if anything to protect those rivers that fall into its abyss. Either the class 4 designation needs to be eliminated, or a new set of guidelines needs to be developed for that class which would insure protection of those waters. This can be realistically accomplished with adequate streamflow and discharge guidelines along with conservation measures that would recognize and protect indigenous wildlife. If no change occurs before approval of the class 4 designation as it now reads, it would be an immeasurable tragedy for the waterways themselves and for those who have invested in them. Consequently, the waters, along with their animal dependants, would suffer degradation including human quality of life, which would be especially true for those living nearby.

Water is a "staff of life" resource that needs to be protected and nurtured at all costs. Besides the newly proposed streamflow measures, I believe that stronger conservation laws are needed in Connecticut as a means to protect our rivers, drinking water supplies and waterways. Deeper wetland setback (buffer zones) restrictions in combination with pesticide, herbicide and certain fertilizer restrictions would be a huge step toward cleaning up and/or improving the health of our waterways. I see winter salting of roadways as a cumulative problem for our waterways and their soils which are a cohesive part of such waters. Currently, it appears that there is very little regulation as to the amount of salt distributed during any given winter storm event, and if there is, it is hard to believe that protocol is being followed. These are just a few of many conservation measures/suggestions that can lead to improved river quality and ecology. Such changes would not only work for impacted rivers, but for all Connecticut waters.

In closing, I would strongly recommend that the Quinnipiac River and waterways of similar quality, be given a designation and/or protective status that would serve to keep these rivers alive, thus portraying a vision of hope for the future.

Robert Pagini

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Pagini".

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